

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 3448

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TAGS: ELAB NL

SUBJECT: NVV WALKS OUT OF SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL

REF THE HAGUE 3308

1. SUMMARY: THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS WALKED OUT OF MEETING OF SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL (SER) AUGUST 4 TO PROTEST THE SER'S DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON 1974 WAGE AND PRICE RECOMMENDATIONS. NVV OFFICIALS SAID PURPOSE OF WALK OUT WAS PRIMARILY TO DEMONSTRATE UNHAPPINESS WITH SER DISCUSSION DOCUMENT AND THAT NVV WOULD STILL PARTICIPATE IN OTHER WORK OF THE SER. BOTH CATHOLIC (NKV) AND PROTESTANT (CNV) TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS, ALTHOUGH ALSO UNHAPPY WITH SER WAGE AND PRICE DOCUMENT, ELECTED TO REMAIN IN SER. UNION LEADERS SAID NVV DECISION WILL NOT PREVENT ALL TRADE UNIONS FROM PARTICIPATING IN COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS AND GOVERNMENT OVER 1974 "SOCIAL ACCORD". THIS IS SECOND TIME WITHIN SIX MONTHS NVV HAS WALKED OUT OF SER. IT IS STILL ANOTHER INDICATION THAT TRADE UNION UNITY REMAINS AN ELUSIVE GOAL. THIS ACTION BY THE LARGEST DUTCH UNION CONFEDERATION ALSO CALLS INTO QUESTION THE ROLE OF THE SER. END SUMMARY.

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2. ON AUGUST 4, SEVEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NVV WALKED OUT OF THE

SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL (SER) TO PROTEST THE SER'S DECISION TO DISCUSS DOCUMENT ON 1974 WAGE AND PRICE POLICY. ACTING NVV PRESIDENT DE BOON CHARGED SER DOCUMENT COULD HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY EMPLOYERS IN VIEW OF ITS STATEMENTS THAT WAGES WERE TOO HIGH, PROFITS TOO LOW, SOCIAL SECURITY PROVISIONS TOO EXPENSIVE, AND THE UNION'S ANNOUNCED POLICY ON INCOME REDISTRIBUTION A NATIONAL DANGER. DE BOON SAID NVV WALKOUT EMPHASIZED NVV DISSATISFACTION WITH REPORT AND WITH SER DECISION TO DISCUSS IT DESPITE NVV OBJECTIONS. REPRESENTATIVES OF CATHOLIC (NKV) AND PROTESTANT (CNV) TRADE UNIONS, WHO DID NOT LEAVE SER MEETING, PROPOSED SERIES OF AMENDMENTS TO REPORT. ACTING NKV PRESIDENT SPIT SAID HE DID NOT THINK NVV'S DECISION PRESENTED ANY PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF UNITED UNION FRONT DURING NEGOTIATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS AND GOVERNMENT IN THE FALL. NVV PRESIDENT DE BOON AGREED WITH SPIT AS LONG AS IT WAS CLEAR NKV AND CNV WERE NOT COMMITTED TO SER RECOMMENDATIONS.

3. SER CHAIRMAN DE POUS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH NVV ATTITUDE AND SUGGESTED NVV'S ACTION WAS FAILURE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY. HE AGREED WITH RECOMMENDATION BY NKV AND CNV THAT STUDY IN PROGRESS ON ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE SER BE SPEEDED UP. NKV AND CNV FEEL FUNCTION OF SER IN CURRENT DUTCH SOCIETY HAS CHANGED AND ORGANIZATION MUST BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.

4. COMMENT: NVV'S LATEST DECISION TO GO IT ALONE IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT EFFORT TO UNIFY DUTCH TRADE UNIONS MAY BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. DESPITE DENIALS, INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES WITHIN NVV -- ESPECIALLY CONFLICT BETWEEN NVV INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND NVV GOVERNING BOARD -- HAVE RESULTED IN TRADE UNION UNITY BECOMING RELATIVELY LOW PRIORITY ITEM. NVV ECONOMIC POLICY ADVISER, WHO WALKED OUT OF SER SESSION, TOLD EMBOFF AT LUNCH AUGUST 4 THAT PREPARATORY SESSION BETWEEN NVV AND CNV/NKV BEFORE SER MEETING WAS EXTREMELY BITTER. HE AGREED INTERNAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THE NVV HAVE MADE TRADE UNION UNITY MORE DIFFICULT. HE ALSO SAID NVV'S LATEST ACTIONS HAVE STRENGTHENED OPPONENTS OF UNITY WITHIN BOTH NKV AND CNV. NVV SOURCE SAID FAILURE TO ACHIEVE LONG EXPECTED UNITY WOULD BE MAJOR SETBACK FOR DUTCH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. HE SPECULATED THAT IF UNITY DECISION NOT MADE SOON, NKV MIGHT WELL SPLIT APART. HE SAW LARGEST NKV UNIONS (INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND BUILDING WORKERS) AFFILIATING WITH NVV WHILE WHAT WAS LEFT OF NKV JOINED WITH CNV. HE THINKS SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, WHICH HE DEPLORES, IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE LIKELY.

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